

## Elementary School Teachers' Self-Efficacy Toward Teaching Writing

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**Abstract.** Writing is an essential aspect of language learning and for the language skills needs of elementary school students. However, the self-efficacy of elementary school teachers towards teaching writing is known by little. Teachers' self-efficacy towards teaching writing affects their perceptions and judgments, influencing instructional decisions during student learning activities. This study aimed to describe elementary school teachers' self-efficacy in teaching writing in the classroom. This research was completed by a quantitative approach with a survey method of 13 elementary school teachers. The research's results indicate that the self-efficacy of elementary school teachers on writing lessons is still not optimal. Almost all teachers (11 out of 13) were at the 61-70% self-efficacy in teaching writing. 1 out of 13 teachers has achieved 60% self-efficacy in learning to write along with the percentage of self-efficacy of elementary school teachers in teaching writing. And only one teacher who has a level of > 70% self-efficacy in learning to write. Changing writing practice in elementary school will require individualized instructional methods to meet student needs as well as the personal assessment of self-efficacy to ensure that beliefs do not hinder the delivery of effective instructional writing practices.

**Keywords:** Teacher's Efficacy, Teaching Writing.

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**INTRODUCTION** ~ Language skills are a crucial provision for communication needs. Communication is one of the basic human needs in interacting. Communication is an individual's ability to convey and receive messages according to the context (Rahman, Sopandi, Widya, & Yugafiati, 2018). Thus, family communication habits will affect the individual's ability to convey and receive messages according to context and affect his critical thinking ability. As written by Permanik and Rahman (2016), genetics, environment, and communication opportunities determine a person's language skills. Communicating is vital in human interaction activities. Communication connects people. Communication can be oral, written, audio, visual, or digital.

Writing is one of the language skills that students must master. Although digitalization has changed the world, including writing, writing is still essential. Writing is a brainwave, a thought, or a

creation. Written language is needed to learn for what the content of writing and the purpose of writing. Both have to be understood by the students.

Furthermore, the writing process is not easy. Writing takes time and persistence. It makes writing complicated or problematic both for the students or the teachers (Harmer, 2007).

The Indonesian education curriculum also shows that one must have the ability is writing skills. It's indicated by the content of the national curriculum, which contains material on writing skills, especially in Indonesian subjects. In addition, the final evaluation in every semester, every year, and at the end of the level was carried out in writing. This is in line with Rahman (2019), who stated that writing is a crucial skill included in the SKL or Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (a graduate competencies qualification standard) at the abstract skills domain in the current national curriculum.

This opinion is in line with Graham & Perin (2007), who wrote that weak writing skills would hinder the student's learning activities, both concerning the learning material studied and the opportunity to continue education at a higher level. In addition, writing as part of literacy is needed in this era. Rahman, Sakti, A.W., Widya, R. N., Yugafiati, R. (2018) explained that to face the 4.0 revolution, should integrate literacy activities into learning.

Unfortunately, the condition gives the opposite with the explanation above. Data shows that the Indonesian literacy index is poor. Based on UNESCO research results, the Indonesian reading motivation index is only 0,001%. In the other data from Badan Pusat Statistik (Statistic Central Agency), children's reading motivation is only 17,56%. The link with writing skill, a well-written product, or skill is not apparent from the infrequently reading activities.

School as a formal education institution should be able to escalate students' literacy skills. But, teachers as educators still have slight competencies even though the teachers' competencies could influence the fruitfulness of the lesson because teachers lead the classroom lesson. Rahman and Puspita (2018) stated that one or another indicator which causes the poor teacher performance while teaching students is less understanding to choose learning model.

Moreover, the national average of Ujian Kompetensi Guru or UKG (a teacher performance test) 2020 only 53,02. It doesn't rule out the possibility that the teacher quality harms student learning, especially in writing lessons. Whereas it is

still at the beginning level concerning elementary writing lessons, requiring considerable appropriate input. It has to deliver by teachers during the learning process. From this condition, we can claim that teachers should understand the necessity.

Besides the teachers' competencies, we have to pay attention to teacher self-efficacy. This study to explore elementary school teachers' self-efficacy toward teaching writing refers to two theories. The first theory is the social cognitive theory from Bandura. The second theory is Graham's writing model, the Writer(s)-within-Community. Bandura's social cognitive theory is the root of Human Agency. Its theory means that humans can direct themselves to their capacities through thinking processes, self-motivation, and self-action. Personal self-efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency. As Bandura emphasized, people will not be compelled to do something unless they believe that they can produce the desired action, not the unwanted action (Bandura, 2000).

In addition, from Bandura (1982), agentic self-efficacy beliefs are the consequence. This consequence affects a person's actions likely to be carried out because he believes that he can produce something he wants. So, self-efficacy beliefs about teaching writing will impact a teacher's instructional practices during writing lessons. The instructions will relate to teachers' minds about whether teachers think they will change their students.

According to Schunk (2012), throughout teaching writing, teachers are not only teaching students to have writing skills, but teachers are also building their self-

efficacy to influence student improvement in the classroom. Indirectly, these conditions form a community of writers or writers community. As stated by Graham (2018) in the Writer(s)-Within-Community model, the community is a place where writing activities and cognitive abilities take place as well as a source of writing for those who write, simultaneously forming a forum to create a written text. When writing activities are being done in class, it can be assumed that the writing community is the class.

However, because teachers come to class bring their provision with various levels of writing knowledge, self-efficacy in certain aspects that are embedded, writing devices used in learning (e.g., pens, paper, or electronic writing instruments), and variations of actions that teachers want to use also vary, so it affects the writing objectives that are formulated and resulted in the written product. It was written by Graham (2018) that there are at least four core components of Graham's writing model, namely devices, actions, writing objectives, and the resulting writing products. These components depend on the interactions that occur in the classroom, including goals, members, and the physical and social environment and history.

### **The role of teachers' self-efficacy in teaching writing**

Pajares in Poch (2019) states that few disagree that teachers' beliefs can influence their own perceptions and judgments, influencing their actions (i.e., instructional decisions during teaching and learning activities). In addition, teachers' beliefs about their self-efficacy

or theories about teaching activities are closely related to teaching activities and instructions delivered by teachers directly to their students in the classroom. This belief also impacts the learning received by students, the quality of their lessons, and the types of activities or activities carried out by teachers in the classroom (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Fink, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).

Beliefs about teachers' self-efficacy (i.e., confidence in their ability to influence student learning) are closely related to two things, namely teacher practice and student outcomes (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Teachers who have stronger self-efficacy have the following characteristics: (1) Interested and willing to try different practices to support student learning, (2) are usually also more organized, (3) Have more plans designed, (4) provide higher quality teaching, (5) Willing to provide more tutoring time for students who need more guidance, (6) Not demeaning students' mistakes (Allinder, 1994; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Graham et al., 2001).

So, based on the above background, it is necessary to describe the self-efficacy of elementary school teachers writing lessons in the classroom. This study aimed to provide an overview of elementary schools' self-efficacy while delivering writing lessons in the classroom. In this study, teacher self-efficacy was measured by a scale developed by Graham et al. which is about beliefs about self-efficacy (Graham et al. 2001). There is still little research discussing the self-efficacy of elementary school teachers, especially in teaching

writing in Indonesia. This study also aimed at elementary school teachers. Graham has developed the measurement scale to be more specific to writing lessons in the classroom. It is very concrete because it focuses on teaching writing, not a broad discussion of global literacy. In addition, the writing context in this measurement scale does not specialize in the curriculum of a particular country. Thus, the scale developed is very in line with the context of this research aimed at elementary school teachers in Indonesia while in writing lessons in the classroom.

### METHOD

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey method. The instrument is a Likert scale questionnaire and interviews with respondents or participants. Initially, the 20 respondents were contacted regarding their willingness to be part of this study. Furthermore, this questionnaire was sent to 20 elementary school teachers.

However, only 13 elementary school teachers complete the data. The respondents of this study consisted of male and female teachers, both low-grade teachers and high-grade teachers. In addition, the respondents are not only teachers in the city but also teachers in the village with various durations of teaching experiences.

In detail, the following table (Table 1) are the number and information of respondents in this study. In this study, data was collected and conducted online to respondents via a google form. At the same time, the research instrument refers to the Teacher Efficacy Scale for Writing (Graham et al., 2001). This questionnaire is writing-specific. It was initially modified from before studies (Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Woolfolk and Hoy, 1990). The instrument consists of 16 question points. These questions use a Likert scale, given a 5-point range: strongly agree, agree, do not know, disagree, and strongly disagree.

**Tabel 1.** Respondents Description

RESPONDENTS DESCRIPTION (n=13)	
<b>GENDER</b>	
Man	3
Woman	10
<b>CLASSROOM TEACHER</b>	
Low-grade teacher	7
High-Class Teacher	6
<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE</b>	
< 1 year	1
1-3 years	7
4-6 years	3
> 6 years	2
<b>LOCATION</b>	
In the village	7
In the city	6

### RESULTS

Table 2 are the results of the data obtained. Note: The Likert scale used is

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) do not know, (4) agree, and (5) strongly

disagree. However, all negative question items (items 2, 4, 8, 11, 13, and 16) were recorded (i.e., 1=5, 2=4, etc.) so that

higher scores represent more positive self-efficacy.

**Table 2.** The Data Result

NO	QUESTIONS	M	SD
1	When a student's writing performance improves, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student.	4.31	0.48
2	Even a good writing teacher may not reach many students.	1.69	0.85
3	If a student did not remember what I taught in a previous writing lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	4.15	0.38
4	The hours in my class have little influence on students' writing performance compared to the influence of their home environment.	2.38	1.26
5	If a student masters a new writing concept quickly, this is because I knew the necessary steps in teaching the concept.	3.85	0.90
6	If I try really hard, I can help students with the most difficult writing problems.	4.31	0.48
7	When a student does better than usual in writing, it is because I exerted extra effort.	3.38	0.96
8	If students are not disciplined at home, they are not likely to accept any discipline during the writing period.	2.15	0.90
9	When a student is having difficulty with a writing assignment, I would have no trouble adjusting it to his/her level.	3.85	0.90
10	The influence of a student's home experience on writing can be overcome by good teaching.	4.46	0.52
11	A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment greatly influences his/her writing achievement.	2.00	1.08
12	If one of my students could not do a writing assignment, I would accurately assess if the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	3.69	0.85
13	The amount a student can learn in writing is primarily related to family background.	1.85	0.80
14	If a student becomes disruptive and noisy during writing time, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	4.23	0.44
15	When students' writing performance improves, it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches.	4.23	0.44
16	If parents would do more in writing with their children, I could do more.	1.46	0.52

## DISCUSSION

The maximum value for points on each indicator is 5. The closer to 5 indicates the better level of self-efficacy, and vice versa. Based on the results of the data obtained, it shows that the self-efficacy of

elementary school teachers towards learning to write is still not optimal. As the data above shows, many teachers are still not convinced that student achievement in learning to write is part of the teacher's



success. (See number 5 ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ) and number 7 ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ )).

The data obtained also shows most elementary school teachers are more convinced that the home environment has a much greater influence, both than the teachers themselves, on students' writing learning outcomes. (See number 4 ( $M = 2.38$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ), number 8 ( $M = 2.15$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), number 13 ( $M = 1.85$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) and number 16 ( $M = 1.46$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ )). Most elementary school teachers are also not so sure of their writing skills to support writing learning. (See number 2 ( $M = 1.69$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ )). It is reinforced by the results of virtual interviews conducted. The authors say that the teacher is only one of the supporting factors. The home environment is much more influential on students' writing ability because students spend more time at home than at school.

However, most teachers already have high self-efficacy on several indicators. That is, teachers believe that the process and management of good writing learning implementation can support students' writing skills as well as overcome learning problems and difficulties. (See point number 1 ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ), number 3 ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ), number 6 ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ), number 9 ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), number 10 ( $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ), number 12 ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), number 14 & 15 ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ ))

In addition, based on the results of virtual interviews with these elementary school teachers, almost all teachers said that in addition to guiding students to continue practicing writing, teachers also tried to improve their writing abilities, for example participating in training

activities and workshops and building writing habits in their daily lives. However, the elementary school teachers also stated that these reasonable efforts had not run optimally because of the difficulty of dividing time with his busy life in class. In addition, some of these elementary school teachers also take advantage of their strengths to support writing learning in class. Such as teachers' ability to use interactive learning media or master certain writing learning materials. Meanwhile, some others still do not involve their strengths in the process of learning to write.

Overall, the elementary school teachers still have not achieved maximum self-efficacy. Almost all teachers (11 out of 13) were at 61-70% self-efficacy in learning to write. 1 out of 13 teachers has achieved 60% self-efficacy in learning to write along with the percentage of self-efficacy of elementary school teachers in learning to write. And only one teacher who has a level of > 70% self-efficacy in learning to write.

## CONCLUSION

Writing is an essential aspect of Elementary School. However, the study result shows that elementary school teachers' self-efficacy towards learning to write is still not optimal. Exploring the self-efficacy of elementary school teachers towards learning to write is very important to understand teachers' ideas about writing. The depth and inflexibility of such beliefs can affect student learning and how teachers provide writing guidance and instruction in their classrooms. Changing writing practice in elementary schools will require individualized instructional methods to meet student needs as well as the

personal assessment of self-efficacy to ensure that beliefs do not hinder the delivery of effective instructional writing practices.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. First, this study did not have an adequate number and equal representation of teachers from various content backgrounds and was not a national representation of teachers. Thus, limitations in sample size and composition include further analysis, particularly factorial analysis, which can examine the structure of scale factors at the elementary level as well as tests of significance to investigate differences across content domains. Second, the response rate was low despite these teachers receiving the link to participate in the research. Third, this study and teacher self-report data and risks teachers do not accurately express their beliefs and self-efficacy.

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